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ELLWOOD FISHER
Washington City.

Speech of Danial Webster at Buffalo.

BUFFALO, Thursday, May 22.

Mr. WEBSTER delivered his speech, which he was invited to make, this afternoon, in the Park, in the midst of a rain-storm, which drenched every person who was in attendance, ladies and all, of whom there were at least one hundred on the platform. It poured in torrents during the whole time; but, nothing daunted, Mr. W. continued till he had said all he wanted to say. He spoke as follows:

Fellow-citizens of the City of Buffalo: I am very glad to see you—I meet you with pleasure. It is not the first time, fellow-citizens, that I have been in Buffalo; and I have always come to it with pleasure. It is a great distance from my own home. I am thankful that circumstances have enabled me to be here again, and I regret that untoward events deprived me of the pleasure of being here when your distinguished fellow-citizen, the President of the United States, came among you, and received from you, as he deserved, not only a respectful but a cordial welcome. The President of the United States has been a resident among you for more than half his life. He has represented you in your State and national councils. You know him and all his relations, both public and private; and it would be bad taste for me to say anything of him, except that I wish to say, with some degree of emphasis, that since my connection with him in the administration of the government of the United States, I have fully concurred with him in all his great and leading measures. But I do not wish to let it rest on that presumption; I wish to declare that the principles of the President, as declared in his annual message, his letters, and all documents and opinions which have proceeded from him, or been issued by his authority, in regard to the great question of the time—that all these principles are my principles; and if he is wrong in them, I am, and always will be. [Applause.] Gentlemen, it has been suggested that it would be pleasant and agreeable to the citizens of Buffalo, and their neighbors in the county of Erie, that I should state to you my opinions, such as they are, on the present condition of the country, its prospects, its hopes, and its dangers; and fellow-citizens, I hope to do that, this day and this hour, as far as my strength will permit.

Gentlemen, believe me, I know where I am. I know to whom I am speaking. I know for whom I am speaking. I know I am here in this singularly prosperous and powerful part of the United States—Western New York—and I know the character of the men who constitute Western New York. I know they are sons of liberty, one and all; that they sucked in liberty with their mother's milk; inherited it with their blood; that it is their daily contemplation and watchful thought. They are men of a very singular quality and condition for a million and a half of people. There are men around us, and here before us, who till their own soils with their own hands; and others who earn their own livelihood by their own labor, with no means beyond their own industry, and their own independence, and their own willingness to labor. These are the men who constitute, to so great an extent, the people of Western New York. But the school-houses I know are among them. Education is among them. They read, and write and think. And here are the fair sex—educated, refined, and intelligent; and here are men who know the history of their country, and the laws of their country, and the institutions of their country; and men in my opinion, lovers of liberty, and they are yet lovers of liberty, under the Constitution of the country, and who mean to maintain that Constitution with all their strength, so help them God. (Great applause.) I hope these observations will satisfy you that I know where I am, under what responsibility I speak, and before whom I appear; and I have no desire that any word I shall say this day, shall be withholden from you or your children, or your neighbors, or the whole world. Because I speak so before you and before my country, and if it is not too solemn to say so, before God himself, the great author of Justice. Gentlemen, there is but one question in this country now, or if there be others, the others are but secondary or so subordinate, that they are all absorbed in that great and leading question; and that is neither more nor less than this: that we can *preserve the Union of the States, not by coercion—not by military power—not by angry controversies.* But can we of this generation, you and I, your friends, and my friends, *can we so preserve the Union of the United States by the administration of the powers of the Constitution, as shall give content and satisfaction to all who live under it, and draw us together, not by military power, but by the silken cords of mutual, fraternal, patriotic affection? That is the question, and no other.*

Gentlemen, I believe in party distinctions. I am a party man. There are questions belonging to party in which I am concerned, and there are opinions entertained by other parties which I repudiate; but what of that? If a house be divided against itself it will fall and crush everybody in it. We must see that we maintain the government over us. We must see that we uphold the Constitution, and we must do so without regard to party. Now, how did this question arise? The question is forever misstated. I dare say if you know much of me, or of my course of public conduct for the last fourteen months, you have heard of my attending Union meetings, and of my fervent demonstrations at Union meetings. Well, what was the object of that? What was the purpose of that? The object and purposes were designedly or thoughtlessly misrepresented. I had an invitation to go to a Union meeting in the county of Westchester; I could not go, but wrote a letter. Well, some wise man of the East said he did not think it was very necessary to hold Union meetings. He did not think there were many disunionists about Tarrytown. And so here in every part of New York, there is a total misapprehension of the purpose and object of these Union meetings. Every one knows there is not a county, or a city, or a hamlet, in the State of New York, that is ready to go out of the Union. There is no man so insane in the whole States, outside a lunatic asylum, as to wish it. But that is not it. We all know that every man and every neighborhood, and all corporations, in the State of New York, is attached to the Union, and has no idea of withdrawing from it. But that is not the point—that is not the point. The question, fellow-citizens—and I put it to you now as the real question—the question is, whether you and the rest of the people of the great State of New York, and of all the States, will so administer the Constitution—will so enact and maintain laws to preserve that instrument, so that you will not only remain in the Union yourselves, but permit your brethren to remain in it, and carry it on? That is the question. Will you concur in measures necessary to maintain the Union? or will you oppose such measures? That is the whole point of the case.

You have thirty or forty members of Congress from New York—you have your proportion in the United States Senate. We have many members of Congress from New England. Well, they maintain the laws that are passed for the administration of the Constitution, and respect the rights of the South, so that the Union may be held together; and not only that we may not go out of it ourselves, which we are not inclined to do, but that by ascertaining and maintaining the rights of others, they may also remain in the Union. Now, gentlemen, permit me to say that I speak of no concessions. If the South wish any concession from me, they won't get it—not a hair's breadth of it. If they come to my house for it, they will not find it if they do. I concede nothing. But I say that I will maintain for them, as I will maintain for you, to the utmost of my power, and in the face of all danger, their rights under the Constitution, and your rights under the Constitution. [Cries of "Good! Good!" &c.] And God forsake me and my children, if I ever be found to falter in one or the other. [Tremendous applause.] It is obvious to every one, and we all know it, that the origin of the great disturbance which agitates the country, is the existence of slavery in some of the States; but we must meet it; we must consider it; we must deal with it, earnestly, honestly, and justly. From the mouth of the St. Johns to the confines of Florida, there existed in the year of grace, 1775, thirteen colonies, of English origin, planted at different times, and coming from different parts of England, bringing with them various habits, and establishing, each for itself, institutions entirely varient from the institutions which they left. But they were of English origin. The English language was theirs; Shakspeare and Milton were theirs, and the Christian religion was theirs, and these things constituted them together. The aggressions of the parent State compelled them to set up for independence. They declared independence, and that immortal act, pronounced on the Fourth of July, 1776, made them independent. That was an act of Union by the United States in Congress assembled. But this act of itself did nothing to establish over them a general government. They had articles of confederation before to carry on the war. They had a Congress. They had articles of confederation afterward to prosecute the war. But thus far they were independent, each of the other. They entered into a simple confederacy, and nothing more. No State was bound by what it did not itself agree to. This was the state of things, gentlemen, at that time.

The war went on—victory perched on the American eagle—our independence was acknowledged. The States were then united together under a confederacy of very limited powers. It could levy no taxes. It could not enforce its own decrees. It was a confederacy instead of being a united government. Experience showed that this was insufficient and inefficient. And, therefore, beginning as far back almost as the close of the war, measures were taken for the formation of the united government—a government in the strict sense of the term—a government that could pass laws binding to the citizens of all the States, and which could inforce those laws by its executive powers, having them interpreted by a judicial power belonging to the government. Well, gentlemen, this led to the formation of the Constitution of the United States, and the cost was framed on the idea of a limited government. It proposed to leave, and did leave, the different institutions of the several States to themselves. It did not propose consolidation. It did not propose that the laws of Virginia should be laws of New York, or that the laws of New York should be the laws of Massachusetts. It proposed only that for certain purposes, and to a certain extent, there should be a united government, and that that government should have the power of executing its own laws. All the rest was left to the several States. And we now come, gentlemen, to the very point of the case. At that time slavery existed in the Southern States, entailed upon them in the time of the supremacy of British laws over us. There it was. It was obnoxious to the middle States, and disliked: and honestly and seriously disliked, as the records of the country will show, by the Southern States themselves. Now, how were they to deal with it? Were the Northern and middle States to exclude from the government those States of the South which had produced a Washington, a Lawrence, and other distinguished patriots of that part of the country? Were they to be excluded from the new government, because they tolerated the institution of slavery? Your fathers and my fathers did not think so. They did not see that it would be of the best advantage to the slaves of the Southern States to cut off the South from all connection with the North.—Their views of humanity led to no such result; and of course, when the Constitution was framed and established, and adopted by you, here in New York, and by your ancestors in New England, it contained an express provision of security to persons who lived in the Southern States to fugitives who owed them service; that is to say, the fugitives from service or labor should be restored to his master, or owner.

Well, that had been the history of the country from its first settlement. It was a matter of common practice to return fugitives before the constitution was formed. Fugitive slaves from Virginia to Massachusetts were restored by the people of Massachusetts. At that day there was a great system of apprenticeship at the North and many apprentices at the North, taking advantage of circumstances, and of vessels sailing to the South, thereby escaped. This led to a clear, express and well defined provision in the Constitution of the country on the subject. Now, I know that all these things are common—that they have been stated a thousand times; but in these days of perpetual discontent and misrepresentation, to state things a thousand times is not enough; for there are more than a thousand persons whose consciences, one would think, led them to make it a duty, to deny, misrepresent, falsify and cover up truths. Now, here is the Constitution, fellow-citizens, and I have taken the pains to transcribe therefrom these words, so that he who runs may read: "No person held to service or labor in one State under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due." Is there any mistake about this? I will not disgrace my profession by supposing such a thing. There is not in or out of an attorney's office in the county of Erie, or elsewhere, one who could raise a doubt, or a particle of doubt, about the meaning of this provision of the Constitution. He may act as witnesses do, sometimes, on the stand. He may wriggle and twist, and say he can't tell. I have seen many such exhibitions in my time, on the part of witnesses, to falsify, and betray, and deny the faith. But there is no man who can read these words of the Constitution of the United States, and say they are not clear and imperative. "No person," the Constitution says, 'held to service or labor in one State, under the law thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from any such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on the claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due." Why, you are told by forty conventions in Massachusetts, in Ohio, in New York, in Syracuse, and elsewhere, that if a colored man came here, he came as a freeman. That is, a *non sequitur.* If he came as a fugative from labor, the Constitution says he is not a freeman, and that he shall be delivered up to his owners who are entitled to his service.

Now, gentlemen, that is the Constitution of the United States. Gentlemen, do we, or do we not, mean to execute that part of the Constitution as well as the rest of it? I suppose there are before me here members of Congress. I suppose there are members of the State legislature, or executive officers, under the State government. I suppose there are judicial magistrates of New York, executive officers, assessors supervisors, justices of the peace, and constables, before me. Allow me to say, gentlemen, that there is not, that there cannot be any one of these officers in this assemblage, or elsewhere, who has not, according to the form of his obligations, bound himself by a solemn oath, before his God, to support the Constitution. They have taken their oaths on the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God, or by uplifted hand, as the case may be, or by a solemn asseveration, as is the practice in some cases. But one and all of them, there is not a man who holds, nor is there any man who can hold any office in the gift of the United States, or in this State, or in any other State, who does not become bound, by the solemn obligation of an oath before God, that he will support the Constitution of the United States.—Well, is he to tamper with that? Is he to falter? Gentlemen, our political duties are as much matters of conscience as any other duties—our sacred domestic ties, our most endearing several relations, are no more the subject for conscientious consideration and conscientious discharge, than the duties we enter into under the Constitution of the United States. The bonds of political brotherhood are the bonds which hold us together from Maine to Georgia. Now, gentlemen, that is the main story of the Constitution of the United States on the question of slavery. Gentlemen, I contend, and have always contended, that after the adoption of the Constitution, any measure of the government calculated to bring slave territory into the United States, was beyond the power of the Constitution, and against its provision. That is my opinion, and it always has been my opinion. It was very consistent, or thought to be so, for the same purpose, in Jefferson's time, to attach Louisiana to the United States. A treaty with France was made for that purpose. But Jefferson's opinion at that moment was that an alteration of the Constitution was necessary to enable it to be done. In considering what I will not now repeat, that opinion was abandoned and Louisiana was admitted by law, without any provision or alteration in the Constitution. At that time I was too young to hold any office or take any share in the political affairs of the country. Louisiana was admitted as a slave State, and became entitled to her representation in Congress on the principle of a mixed basis. Florida was afterwards admitted. Then, too, I was out of Congress; I had been in it once; but I had nothing to do with the Florida treaty or the admission of Florida.

My opinion remains unchanged, that it was not in the original scope or design of the Constitution to admit new States out of the foreign territory, and that for one, I never would consent, and no matter what may be said at the Syracuse convention, or any other assemblage of insane persons, *I never would consent that there should be one foot of slave territory beyond what the old thirteen States had at that time of the formation of the Union. Never, never. The man can't show his face to me and say he can prove that I ever departed from that doctrine. He would sneak away, and slink away, or hire a mercenary to keep that he might say what a mercenary apostate from liberty Daniel Webster has become.* [Laughter and cheers] *He knows himself to be a hypocrite and falsifier.* But, gentlemen, I was in public life when the proposition to annex Texas to the United States was brought forward. You know the revolution in Texas, which divided that country from Mexico, was in the year 1835 or '36. I saw then—and I don't know that it required any particular foresight—that it would be the very next thing to bring Texas, which was designed to be a slaveholding State, into this Union. I did not wait. I sought an occasion to proclaim my *utter aversion* to any such measure, and I *determined to resist* it with all my strength to the last. Now, gentlemen, it is not for your edification, I am sure that I now revive what I have before spoken in the presence of this assembly. I was in this city in the year 1837, and long before I left New York on that excursion, in the course of which I went to the South and returned here, my friends in New York were kind enough to offer me a public dinner as a testimony of their public regard for me. *I went out of my way, on that occasion, for the purpose of showing what I anticipated in the attempt to annex Texas as a slave territory, and said it should be opposed by me to the last extremity. And in Niblo's Garden, in March, 1837, I made a speech.* Well, there was the press all around me, the Whig press and the Democratic press. Some spoke commendatory enough of my speech, but all agreed *that I took pains to step out of my way to denounce in advance the annexation of Texas as a slave territory to the United States.* I said on that occasion: "Gentlemen, we all see that by whomsoever possessed, Texas is likely to be a slaveholding country; and I frankly avow my entire unwillingness to do anything that shall extend the slavery of the African on this continent, or add other slaveholding States to the Union. When I said that I regarded slavery as a great moral and political evil, I only used language that has been adopted by distinguished men, themselves citizens of slaveholding States. I shall do nothing therfore to extend or encourage its further extension.

We have slavery already among us. The Constitution found it among us—it recognized it, and gave it solemn guarantees. To the full extent of these guarantees we are all bound in honor, in justice and by the Constitution. All the stipulations contained in the Constitution, in favor of the slaveholding States which are already in the Union, ought to be fulfilled, and, so far as depends on me, shall be fulfilled, in the fullness of their spirit, and to the exactness of their letter. Slavery, as it exists in the States, is beyond the reach of Congress. It is the concern of the States themselves. They have never submitted it to Congress, and Congress has no right or power over it. I shall concur, therefore, in no act, no measure, no menace, no indication of purpose, which shall interfere, or threaten to interfere, with the exclusive authority of the several States over the subject of slavery, as it exists within their respective limits. All this appears to be a matter of plain and imperative duty. But when we come to speak of admitting new States, the subject assumes a new and entirely different aspect. Our rights and our duties are then both different. The free States and all the States are then at liberty to accept or reject. When it is proposed to bring new members into this political partnership, the old members have a right to say on what terms such partners are to come in, and what they are to bring along with them. In my opinion, the people of the United States will not consent to bring in a new, vastly extensive, and slaveholding country, large enough for half a dozen or dozen States, into the Union. In my opinion, they ought not to consent to it." Gentlemen, I was mistaken; Congress did consent to the bringing in of Texas. They did consent, and I was a false prophet. Your own State consented, and the majority of the representatives of New York consented. I went into Congress before the final consummation of the deed, and there I fought, holding up both my hands, and proclaiming with a voice stronger than it now is, against [illegible] it. But you would [illegible] and you did have it so. Nay, gentlemen, I will tell the truth, whether it shames the devil or not. [Laughter.] *Persons who have aspired high as lovers of liberty—as eminent lovers of the Wilmot Proviso—as eminent Free-soil men, and who have mounted over our heads and trodden us down as if we were mere slaves, they are the men that brought Texas into this country.* That is the truth, and I declare it before you, and in the presence of my God, that it was so. Look to the journals.

Without the consent of New York, Texas would not have come into the Union, under either of the original resolutions or afterwards. But New York voted for the measure. *The two senators from New York voted for it, and turned the question, and you may thank them for the glory, the renown, and the happiness of having five or six slave States added to the Union.* [Great sensation.] Don't blame me for it. Let them answer who did the deed, and who are now proclaiming liberty, and using it for humbug and trading purposes. Gentlemen, who aided in bringing in Texas? It was all fairly told to you. You heard Moses and the prophets, [laughter,] but if one had risen from the dead, such was your devotion to that policy, at that time, that you would not have heard him, or listened to him for a moment. Well, all that I will now say is, that, with the blessing of God, *I will not now or hereafter, before the country or the world, consent to be numbered among those who introduced new slave power into the Union. I did all in my power to prevent it.* [Applause.] And again, gentlemen, the Mexican war broke out. This vast territory was acquired, and the peace was made; and, much as I disliked the war, I disliked the peace more, because it brought in these territories. That territory was unknown. I did not know what it might be. The plan came from the South. I knew that certain Southern gentlemen wished the acquisition of California and New Mexico, and Utah, as a means of extending slave authority and slave population; everything was known about it. I did not fall into their idea much, but seeing a quarrel, as I conceived; seeing how much it would distract the Union, I voted against the peace with Mexico. I voted against the acquisition. I wanted none of her territory, California, New Mexico, nor Utah. They were rather ultra American. They were far from us, and I saw that they might lead to a political disturbance, and I voted against them all—against the treaty, and against the peace, and I am glad of it. Seeing that it would be an occasion of dispute; that by the controversy the whole Union would be agitated, Messrs. Berrien, Badger, and other respectable and distinguished men of the South, voted against the acquisition and the treaty which secured it; and if the men of the North had voted the same way, we would have been spared all the difficulties that have grown out of it. [Applause.]

Now, there is no sort of doubt, gentlemen, that there were some persons in the South who supposed that California, if it came in at all, would come in as a slave State. You know the extraordinary events that arose there. You know that California received a rush from the Northern people, and that an African slave could no more live there than he could on the top of Mount Hecla. Of necessity it became a free State, and that no doubt was a source of much disappointment to the South. And then there was New Mexico and Utah; what was to be done with them? Why, gentlemen, from the best investigation I have given the subject, and the reflection I have devoted to it, *I was of the opinion that the mountains of New Mexico and Utah could no more sustain American slavery than the snows of Canada.* I saw it was impossible. I thought so then, and I think so now. *Therefore, gentlemen, when it was proposed in Congress to apply the Wilmot Proviso to New Mexico and Utah, it appeared to me just as absurd as to apply it here in Western New York.* I saw that the snowy hills, the eternal mountains, and the climate of those countries, would never support slavery. No man could carry a slave there with any expectation of profit. It could not be done; and as the South thought it was irritating and disrespectful, I was not willing to do it, and, *therefore,* I saw no occasion for applying the Wilmot Proviso to New Mexico or Utah. I voted accordingly, and who doubts it now? *The law admitting those territories passed without any proviso. Is there a slave, or is it likely there will be one there?* Why, there is not a man in the United States so stupid as not to see at this moment, that such a thing was wholly unnecessary, and that it was calculated to irritate and offend. And I am not one who is disposed to create irritation, or give offense to our brothers, or to break up fraternal friendship, *without cause.* The question was open whether slavery should or should not go to New Mexico or Utah. There is no slavery. There is not the shinning face of an African there. It is utterly impracticable, and utterly ridiculous to suppose it, and no one, who does not mean to agitate, will urge it. Well, gentlemen, we have a race of agitators all over the country—some connected with the press; some, I am sorry to say, connected with the learned professions. They agitate—their livelihood consists in agitating—their freehold, their copyhold, their capital, their all and all, depends upon the excitement of the public mind.

Gentlemen, these things went on at the commencement of the year 1850. There were two great questions before the public. There was the question of the Texan boundary, and of a government for New Mexico, which I consider as one question; and there was the question of making a provision for the restoration of fugitive slaves. Gentlemen, on these subjects I have something to say. Texas, as you know, established her independence of Mexico, by her revolution and the battle of San Jacinto, which made her a sovereign power. I have already stated to you what I have anticipated from the movement—that she would ask to come into the Union as a slave State. We admitted her in 1845, and we admitted her as a slave State. We admitted her in 1845, and we admitted her with her own boundaries—remember that. She claimed by conquest all that territory which was commonly called New Mexico, east of the Rio Grande. She claimed also by these limits what her Constitution had declared and established as the proper limits of Texas. This was her claim, and when she was admitted into the United States, the United States did not define her territory. They admitted her as she was. We took her as she defined her own limits, and with the power of making three additional slave States. I say "we," but I did not always remember that. Now, in this state of things, let us go back to 1850. What was the state of things in 1850? There was Texas claiming all that, or a great part of that which the United States had acquired from Mexico, as New Mexico. She stated that it belonged to her by conquest and by her admission into the United States, and she was ready to enforce her claims by the force of arms. Recollect that is not all. A man must be ignorant of the history of the country who does not know, that at the commencement of 1850, there was a great agitation throughout the whole South. Who does not know that six or seven of the largest States of the South had already taken measures for separation—were preparing for disunion in some way? They concurred with Texas, for Texas was prepared or preparing to enforce her rights by force of arms. Troops were enlisted, and don't you remember, gentlemen, that at this state of things how many thousand persons in the South were disaffected towards the Union, or were desirous for breaking it up, or were ready to join Texas—to join her ranks, and see what they could make in a war to establish the rights of Texas to New Mexico? The public mind was disturbed. There were thousands and thousands ready to join Texas. Now, all the extreme South at this time was disaffected towards the Union. These very men were in a condition to fall into any course of things which should be violent and destructive.

Well, then, gentlemen, what was to be done again, as far as Texas was concerned? Allow me to say, gentlemen, there are two sorts of foresight. There is a military foresight, which sees what will be the result of a due appeal to arms; and there is also a statesman like foresight, which looks not at the result of battles and carnage, but through the results of political disturbances, the violence of faction carried into military operations, and the horrors attendant on civil war. I never had a doubt, gentlemen, that if the administration of Gen. Taylor had gone to war, and had sent troops into New Mexico, *that he would have whipped them in a week.* The power on one side was far superior to all the power on the other. But what then? What if Texan troops, assisted by thousands of volunteers from the disaffected States, had gone to New Mexico, and had been defeated and turned back, would that have settled the boundary question? Now, gentlemen, I wish I had ten thousand votes—I wish I could draw around me the whole people of the United States—and I wish I could make them all hear what I now declare in my own conscience, before the Power who sits on high, and who will judge you and me hereafter, as my solemn belief, that if this Texas controversy had not been settled by Congress, in the manner called the adjustment measures, civil war would have ensued—blood, American blood, would have been shed; and who can tell what else would have been the consequence? *Gentlemen, in an honorable war, if a foreign foe invade us—if our rights were threatened—if it were necessary to defend them by arms—I am not afraid of blood.* And, if I am too old myself, I hope there are those connected with me who are young, and willing to defend their country to the last drop of their blood. [Sensation.] *But I cannot express the horror I feel at the shedding of blood in a controversy between one of these States and the government of the United States,* because I see in it, in the sight of heaven, a disruption of all those ties that make us a great and happy people. Gentlemen, that was the great question, the leading question, at the commencement of the year 1850. Then there was the other, and that was a matter of the Fugitive slave law; let me say a word about that? Under the provisions of the Constitution in General Washington's administration in the year 1793, there was passed a law for the restoration of fugitive slaves, by general consent. No one opposed it at that period. It was thought to be necessary to carry the Constitution into effect. The great men of New England and New York all concurred in it. It passed and answered all the purposes expected from it, till about the year 1841 or 1842, when the States interfered to make enactments in opposition to it.

The law of Congress said that State magistrates might execute the duties of the law. Some of the States passed penal enactments involving a penalty on any who executed authority under the law. Others of them denied the use of their jails to carry the law into effect; and generally at the commencement of the year 1850, it was absolutely—I say it was absolutely—indispensable that Congress should pass some law for the execution of this provision of the Constitution, or else give up that institution entirely. That was the question. I was in Congress when the law was passed. I was for a proper law. I had, indeed, proposed a different law. I was of opinion that a summary trial by a jury might be had, which would satisfy the prejudices of the people, but I left the Senate and went to another station before the law was passed. The law of 1850 passed. Now I undertake as a lawyer, and on my professional character, to say to you and to all, that the law of 1850 is decidedly more favorable to the fugitive than General Washington's law of 1793; and I tell you why. In the first place, the present law places the power in much higher hands—of independent judges of the superior and circuit courts and district courts and commissioners who are appointed to office for their law learning. Every fugitive is brought before a tribunal of high character, of eminent ability, of respectable station. Well then in the first place, when a claimant comes from Virginia to New York to say that one A or one B has ran away, or is a fugitive from service or labor, he brings with him a record of the county from which he comes, and that record must be sworn to before a magistrate and certified by the county clerk as to its correctness. The affidavit must state that A or B (as the case may be) had departed under such and such circumstances and had come here, and that record under seal is, by the Constitution of the United States, entitled to full credit in every other State. Well, the claimant, or his agent, come here, and he presents to you the seal of the courts of Virginia, that A and B had escaped from service. He must prove that he is here. He brings a witness and asks if this is the man, and he proves it, or in ten cases out of eleven the answer would be, "Yes, Massa, I am your slave, I did escape from your service." Such is the present law, and so much opposed and maligned as it is, it is a more favorable law to the fugitive than the law of Washington's of 1793, which created no disturbance at the time it was passed, and which was sanctioned by the North as well as by the South.

But this opposition is a sentiment of modern times. From whom does this clamor come? Why, look at the proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention—look at their resolutions. Do you find among all those persons who oppose this Fugitive slave law any admission whatever that any law ought to be passed to carry into effect the solemn stipulations of the Constitution? Tell me any such case! Tell me if any resolution was passed by the Convention at Syracuse favoring the carrying out of the Constitution? Not one! The fact is, gentlemen, they oppose the whole—not a man of them admits that there ought to be any law on the subject. They deny altogether that the provisions of the Constitution ought to be carried into effect. Well, what do they say? Look at the proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Conventions in Ohio, Massachusetts, and at Syracuse, in the State of New York. What do they say, that, so help them God, no colored man shall be sent from the State of New York, back to his master in Virginia. Don't they say that, and for the fulfilment of that they pledge their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor! [Laughter.] They pledged their honor to violate the laws of their country—they pledged their sacred honor to resist their execution—they pledged their sacred honor to commit treason against the laws of their country! God bless them, and help them who pledge their sacred honor in such a cause! [Applause.] I have already stated, gentlemen, what your observation of this must have been. I will only recur to it for a moment, for the purpose of persuading you, as public men and private men—as good men and patriotic men—that you ought, to the extent of your ability and influence, see to it that such laws are established and maintained as shall keep you and the South, and the West and all the country together, as far as it is just and right, and as far as the Constitution demands. I say, that what is demanded of us is to be up to our Constitutional duties—to do for the South what the South have a right to demand. Gentlemen, I have been some time before the public. My character is known, my life is before the country. I profess to love liberty as much as any man living; but I profess to love American liberty, that liberty which is secured to the country by the Constitution under which we live, and I have no great opinion of that liberty which goes over the restraints of law or of the Constitution. I hold the Constitution of the United States to be the bulwark, the only bulwark of our liberties, and our national chart. I don't mean that you should become slaves under the Constitution. That is not American liberty; that is not the liberty of the Union for which our fathers fought—that liberty which has given us a right to be known and respected all over the world. Gentlemen, let me say to you that, as much as I admire the character of the people of Western New York, as much as I wish to retain your good opinion, if you would ever place me hereafter in any connection with public life, let me tell you now that you must not expect from me the slightest variation, even of a hair's breadth, from the Constitution of the United States. [Cries of "Good! Good! Good!"]

I am a Northern man. I was born at the North—educated at the North—have lived all my days at the North. I know five hundred Northern men to one Southern man. My sympathies—all my sympathies—my love of libery for all mankind, of every color, are the same as yours. My affections and hopes in that respect are exactly like yours. I wish to see all men free—all men happy. I have no associations out of the Northern States. My people are your people. And yet I am told some times that I am not a liberty man, because I am not a Free-soil man [Laughter.] What am I? what was I ever? what shall I be hereafter, if I would sacrifice, for any consideration, that love of American liberty which has glowed in my breast since my infancy, and which I hope will never leave me till I expire? [Applause.] Gentlemen, *I regret extremely that slavery exists in the Southern States, and that Congress has not power to act upon it. But it may be in the dispensation of Providence—some remedy may be found for it.* But, in the meantime, I hold on to the Constitution of the United States; and you need never expect from me, under any circumstances, that I shall falter from it—that I shall be otherwise than frank and decisive. I would no part with my character as a man of firmness and decision, and honor and principle, for all that the world holds. *You will find me true to the North, because all my sympathies are with the North. My affections, my children, my hopes, my everything, is with the North.* But, when I stand up before my country as one appointed to administer the Constitution of the country, by the blessing of God, I will be just. [Great applause.] Gentlemen, I expect to be libeled and abused. Yes! libeled and abused. But it don't disturb me. I have not lost a night's sleep for a great many years. I have some talent for sleeping. [Laughter.] And why should we not expect to be libeled? Is not the Constitution of the United States libeled and abused? Don't some people call it the production of hell? Is not Washington libeled and abused? Is he not called a bloodhound on the track of the African negro? Are not our fathers libeled and abused by their own children? And ungrateful children they are—and I am afraid, in some cases, their mothers played false. [Laughter.] How, then, shall I escape? I don't expect to escape, but knowing these things I impute no bad motive to any one.

The great settlement measures of the last Congress are laws. Many respectable men, representatives from your own State and from other States, did not concur in them. I don't impute any bad motive to them. I am ready to believe they are Americans all. They may not have thought them necessary—they may have thought these laws would be passed without their concurrence. Let all that pass away. If they are now men who will stand by what is done, and stand up for their country, and say that these laws were passed by a majority of the whole country—we must stand by them and live by them, I will respect them all as friends. Gentlemen, allow me to ask of you to-day, what do you think would have been the situation of the country at this time, in your judgment, if these laws had not been passed by Congress? If the question of the Texan boundary had not been settled, New Mexico and Utah had been left as desert places, and no government had been provided for them; and if the other great measures, to which State laws had opposed so many obstacles in the restoration of fugitives, had not been settled, I ask what would have been the state of this country now? You men of Erie county—you men of New York—I adjure you to go home to-night and meditate on these subjects. What would have been the state of this country—now—at this moment—if these laws had not been passed? I have given my opinion that we should have had a civil war. I refer it to you, therefore, for your consideration; meditate on it? do not be carried away by notions or ideas of metaphysics; think practically on the great question of what would have been the condition of the United States at this moment if we had not settled these agitating questions. I have stated that, in my opinion, there would have been civil war.

Gentlemen, will you allow me for a moment to advert to myself? I have been a long time in public life; of course, not many years remain to me. At the commencement of 1850, I saw something of the condition of the country, and I thought the inevitable consequence would be civil war. I saw danger in leaving Utah and New Mexico without any government—a prey to the power of Texas. I saw this condition of things arising from the interference of some of the States, in defeating some of the operations of the Constitution in respect to the restoration of fugitive slaves; and, gentlemen, I made up my mind to encounter whatever might betide me, and allow me to say, something which was not entirely unexpected. A member of the House of Representatives told me that he had made a list of 140 speeches which had been made in Congress on the slavery question. That is a very large number, my friend, I said, but how is that? Why, said he, a Northern man gets up and speaks with considerable power and fluency until the speaker's hammer knocks him down—then gets up a Southern man, and he speaks with more warmth—he is nearer the line, and he comes out against the North. He speaks his hour and stops, and so it has gone on until I have got one hundred and forty speeches on my list. Well, said I, where are they? If the speaker, said he, was a Northern man, he held forth against slavery; and if he was from the South, he abused the North; and all those speeches were sent by the members to their own localities, where they were the cause of the local irritation which existed at the time. In this way the other side of the question was not heard—that is the way of it. I thought that in this state of things, quiet was necessary. You can't suppose that I was indifferent to the danger. I am a Massachusetts man, and know what Massachusetts used to be. I am a Massachusetts man. Massachusetts has kept me a great while in Congress. I will honor her. I respect her, and mean to do so as long as I live. [Applause.]

Well, gentlemen, suppose that on that occasion I had taken a different course from what I did. If I may allude to anything so insignificant as myself—suppose that on the 7th of March, instead of making a speech that would reconcile the country, I had joined in the general clamor of the party—suppose I had said I will have nothing to do with any accommodation—we will admit no satisfaction—we will let Texas invade New Mexico—we will leave New Mexico and Utah to take care of themselves, and we will plant ourselves on the Wilmot Proviso, and let the devil take the hindermost. Now, gentlemen, I don't mean to say that great consequences would follow from that; but suppose I had taken such a course, how could I be blamed for it? Was I not a Massachusetts man? Did I not know Massachusetts' sentiments and prejudices? But what of that—I am an American! [Great applause.] I was made a whole man by God, and I don't mean to make myself half a one. [Tremendous outbursts of applause.] I own reputation—for I flattered myself that a service of 40 years has given me some character. I thought it was my duty, and I did not care what was to give way. I felt it to be my duty to come out—to go for my country and my whole country, and to exert every power I had to keep that country together. [Great applause.] I cared for nothing—I was afraid of nothing—but meant to do my duty. Duty performed makes a man happy—duty neglected makes a man unhappy as well as those around him. I therefore, gentlemen, in the face of all circumstances and dangers, was ready to go forth and do that which my country—your country—demanded of me; and, gentlemen, allow me to say here to-day that if the fate of John Rogers had been presented to me—if I had heard the thorns cracking—by the blessing of Almighty God I would have gone on and discharged the duty which I thought my country called upon me to perform. I would have become a martyr to save my country.

And now, gentlemen, farewell! Live and be happy. Live like patriots. Live like Americans. Live in the enjoyment of the inestimable blessings which your fathers prepared for you, and if anything that I may do hereafter should be inconsistent in the slightest degree with the opinions and principles which I have addressed to you, then discard me forever from your recollection.

By the arrival at New York on Wednesday morning of the schooner Bonita, Capt. Sbisa, from Vera Cruz, we have dates from that city to the 1st inst., and from the Mexican capital to the 26th April. The Bonita brought $1,500 in specie.

The schooner Oregon, Capt. Trenis, also arrived this morning from Tampico, with dates from that city to the 4th ult. The Oregon brought $8,475 in specie on freight.

We learn through Capt. Sbisa that a man by the name of Oscar Roberts, a German by birth, who was acting as assistant United States consul at Vera Cruz for Capt. Rogers, had collected the freight money, amounting to $4,500, of the brig Metamora, of New York from Mobile, together with other large amounts, and had absconded. The Metamora took a cargo of cotton into Vera Cruz.

The *Universal* of the the 24th of April says: "The House of Representatives approved yesterday the resolution taken by the Senate to grant eighty days respite to the committees of both branches, to try to effect arrangements or compromises with the public creditors. The opposition to this was strong, for, as Messrs. Medina and Blanco pointedly observed, unless before coming to this resolution funds be provided, or be known to exist, sufficient to comply with the bargains that be made with the creditors, it would be making matters worse. At present, knowing that no funds exist, to call upon them to promise, and afterwards acquaint them with the fact, would be a perfect mockery. It stood on record that Senor Aguirre in his report of the 9th ult., stated that in order to begin to make any settlement, they required, in the first instance, to obtain four millions of dollars, of which they were minus."

We understand, from another source, that notwithstanding all their jealousy of American encroachments, it was proposed, as the only medium of salvation, to try to negotiate a loan from the United States government. They will derive more benefit from friendly connection with this country than some of their citizens are willing to acknowledge.

The Mexican government has granted a respite of six months to the company which was engaged to establish the line of wires for a magnetic telegraphic communication between Vera Cruz and Mexico.

In Tampico the arrival of flour from the United States, under the temporary license granted by the Mexican government, was a matter of public congratulation, the Noticioso saying that it affords the people better bread than they have been accustomed to of late. They complain, however, that the bakers make no difference in the quantity of bread they deal out for a certain value when flour is cheap, and desire the attention of government to this point.

The Indians continue their depredations in Durango and other States in the North. Near Canutillo, a few weeks since, they made a descent upon a large stock-raising hacienda, and after killing all the persons having charge of the place, drove off a large herd of cattle and other stock.

They have finally introduced the *Schotisch* in the Mexican capital, and the dark-eyed senoras and senoritas are in raptures with it, if the newspaper accounts be true.

It is stated that many of the streets in the city of Mexico are abandoned on account of the robberies committed, and the want of an efficient police. In one of the main thoroughfares the rascally ladrones had a pitched battle with the police, and overcame them.

The Teatro National, in the city of Mexico, was opened for the season on the night of the 20th ult. Great complaints are made in relation to the orchestra.

A company of mounted police has been disbanded for allowing the stage coach to be openly robbed near El Punto de la Vina.

The legislature of the State of Mexico has passed a stringent law against gambling, many games which have heretofore been allowed at the religious feasts being now prohibited.

ARREST IN CUBA.—The New York Sun announces, the arrest at Principe, May, 4, and their imprisonment in the Moro Castle, of the folowing persons:—

Don Serapio Reclo, lawyer; Don J. R. Betancourt, lawyer; Ferdinand Betancourt, lawyer; Francisco Y. Batista, planter; Salvador Cisneros, planter; Manual Arango, lawyer; Joaquin Rivera, lawyer; Francisco Varona, planter; Francis Quezada, planter. These are all said to be gentlemen of the highest respectability, connected by ties of blood with many of the first families in the Island. The Pueato Principe correspondent adds:

"They are also in pursuit of Senor Augustin de Miranda, notary public; Senor Joseph Castillo, a wealthy planter, and others. The arrest are made by order of the captain general to Senor Lemerick, our governor. The day of reckoning with our oppressors is at hand. The next steamer will bring you stirring news."